

To the City of Newton's Land Use Committee of the City Council:

I am writing in support of a development slated for the lot running from Needham Street along Oak Street to the Upper Falls Greenway and Tower Road. Currently the land is occupied by a shopping plaza and parking lots.

Northland Investment Corporation has proposed a multi-use development for this tract of land with 800 apartments for rent, including 123 apartments put aside for affordable housing. This project would take an underused shopping center and neglected parcel of land and turn it into a resource for the city and an attraction for young people and families to live in and shop - including those struggling to keep up with soaring housing costs.

Northland is also responsible for building and operating The Merc in Waltham, which is very attractively designed. That appears to be a great project but this new proposal would really be something special: this development in Newton would include huge amounts of new green space, a community center, and a "mobility hub" with shuttle service to communities in Newton and popular commuter destinations and transportation hubs around the Greater Boston area.

With the building aesthetics of The Merc, but with all these additional amenities, this development would be an asset and attraction within the city, and to all who live in and near it.

Please put your full support behind this project.

Best wishes,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, consisting of a large, stylized 'D' followed by a long horizontal stroke and a loop at the end.

Dezhen Zhang  
142 Hartman Rd.  
Newton, MA 02459